

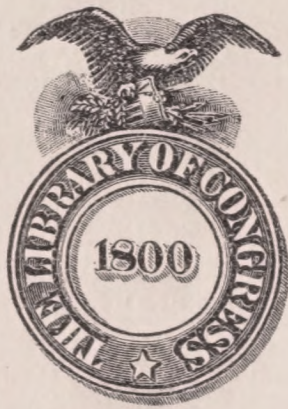
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THE LITTLE CAVE DWELLERS



ELLA
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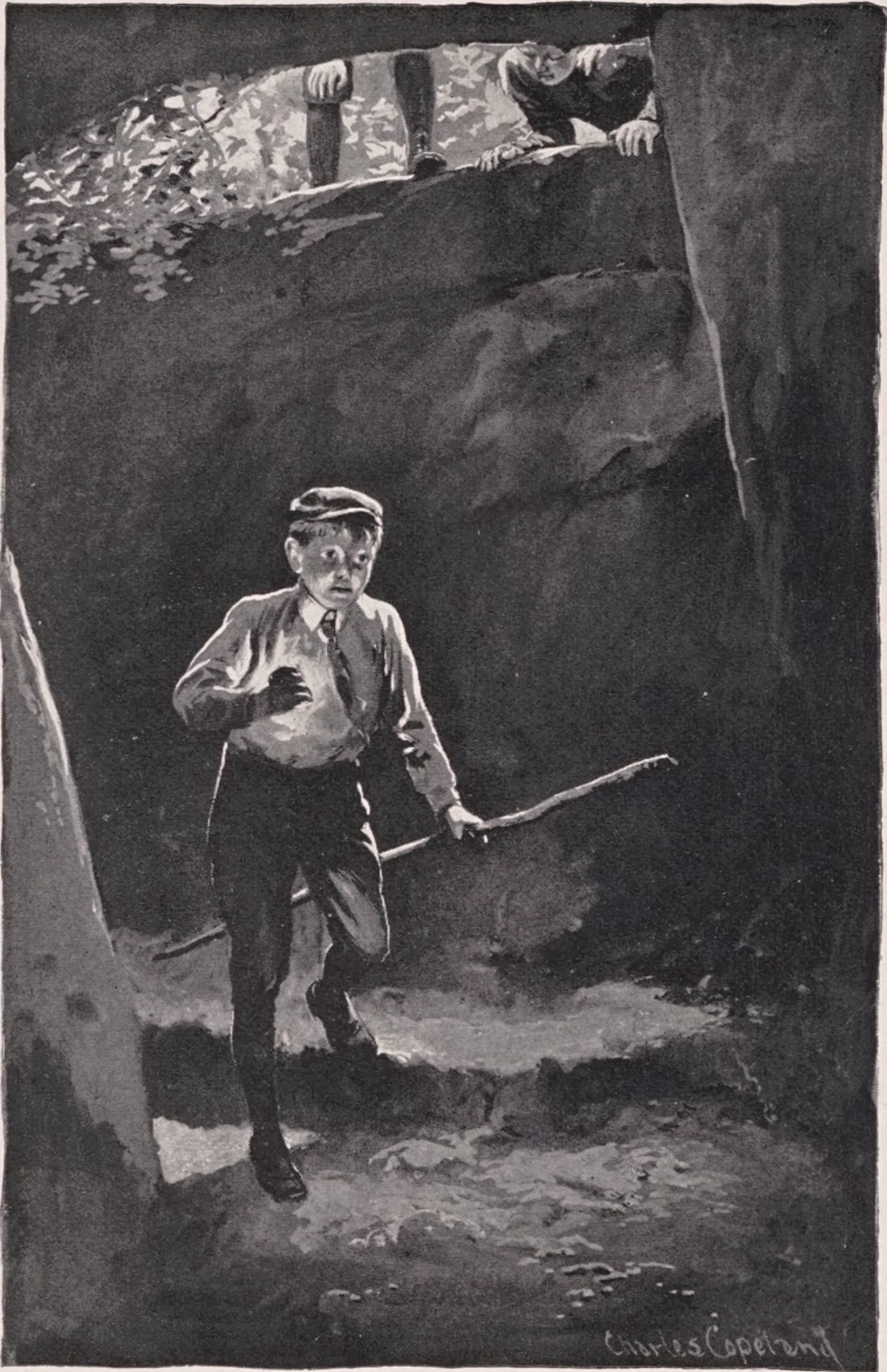


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HE TOOK A MATCH FROM HIS POCKET AND SCRATCHED IT.
Page 45.



THE LITTLE CAVE-DWELLERS

BY
ELLA FARMAN PRATT

New York.
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Publishers.

THE LITTLE CAVE-DWELLERS

BY
ELLA FARMAN PRATT

AUTHOR OF "HAPPY CHILDREN," "THE PLAY LADY."

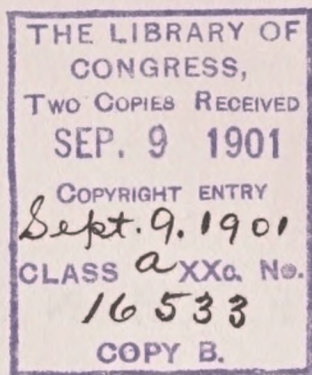


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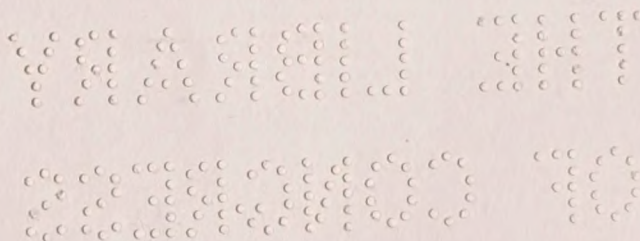
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BOSTON, U. S. A.

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The Little Cave-Dwellers.

I.

A YOUNG INDIAN.

IF there was anything in which Duke Black took pride it was that he had Indian blood in his veins. It was a tradition in the family that far back on both sides of the house there was Indian blood. "Good, early, colonial Indian blood," Rebecca laughed one day; "we needn't be ashamed of it, Marmaduke."

"Yes, Becky! Paugus and Miantonimo were colonial Indians, weren't they!" That was a new thought. Duke lighted up all over at the idea.

"Yes," said Rebecca, "historic Indians; and besides," she added, laughing, "we are Chamberlains! To be sure, we don't know whether we're descended from Rebecca, the Massachusetts witch, or from Richard, clerk of the Council when Cranfield was royal governor of the Province of New Hampshire, or from Paugus John; but probably it's from Paugus John."

Now Duke never liked to be told, as Rebecca well knew, that he was descended from the Chamberlain that killed Paugus, his favorite Indian. He retorted on his sister fiercely:

"Father never said John Chamberlain was our ancestor — he said he was a relation. It's likely we're descended from the witch! Your name is Rebecca, and great-grandmother's was Rebecca — Rebecca Chamberlain, too, hers was."

Marmaduke didn't care so very much about the Chamberlains. Nor did he care about the Blacks. The Blacks were scholarly Puritan gentlemen who came over to Maryland from England in the days of the second King Charles to secure liberty to believe what they pleased. The idol of Marmaduke's dreams was Paugus, the great warrior of the Pigwackets.

Marmaduke had heard the story of the fight at Lovewell's Pond ever since he was old enough to hear stories. His father loved to relate it, chiefly, no doubt, because John Chamberlain was some sort of a relative. That, too, was probably the reason why Rebecca liked the old tale of 1725. But little Duke always heard it with his heart beating high for Paugus.

"And," Duke's father used to say — and at this point the little boy on his knee would sit up very straight — "after Captain Lovewell had been killed, and a good many of the white men, and a good many of the Indians, John Chamberlain and Paugus both came down to a clear place in the pond to wash their guns.

They knew each other. Paugus, and some of the other Indians too, had often been in the white settlements. The Indians and whites had shouted and talked to each other by name during the fight. 'I shall kill you now, Paugus!' called out Chamberlain, hurrying to get his gun cleaned. 'No, I kill you, John!' said Paugus. Both worked as fast as they could. 'You look out, Paugus!' said Chamberlain. 'No, *you* look out, John.' And they both hurried, and Chamberlain got his gun loaded a little the first, and he shot Paugus dead. And Paugus had his loaded at almost the same minute, and he hurried, but his gun went up as he fell, and the bullet just missed Chamberlain's head — just missed it and that's all. And after the battle the Indians buried Paugus nearby, but Chamberlain went back to Massachusetts and lived a great many years."

Here the little boy would let his head fall back upon his father's breast.

"'It was a bloody fight,'" he prompted.

"It was a bloody fight," his father went on. "The trees all around the pond were shot full of bullets. Men from Massachusetts came up and carved the names of the white men who fell, on some of the trees."

"'And fifty-nine years after the fight,'" prompted the little boy.

"And fifty-nine years after the fight," went on Mr. Black, "Doctor Jeremy Belknap, who was a great minister and historian, visited the

spot, and saw the names on the aged trees, and the places where the bullets had been dug out by visitors. And this John Chamberlain was a relative of ours."

One day little Duke said he didn't like John Chamberlain, and wished he hadn't been a relation of theirs!

Perhaps it was his indignation against John Chamberlain that led Duke to claim relationship with Paugus; perhaps it seemed to him the only way he could make it up to Paugus for a Chamberlain having killed him.

"How do you know he wasn't a relation?" he argued. "How do you know that some Chamberlain back in those days didn't marry a girl of the Paugus race? There was some Indian or other among father's folks away back, and *why* couldn't it be one of Paugus's folks?"

Duke had an impetuous way, when he was a little boy, of arguing and proving and settling things to his own satisfaction. In the same manner as he established his descent from the old Pigwacket Chief, he settled his relationship, on his mother's side, to Miantonimo, a Chief of the Narragansetts. He had frequent times of "reasoning it out" with his mother, much to the amusement of the family.

"*You* believe, don't you, mother, that away back you have Indian blood?" he would say.

"It has always been said so," his mother would answer.

“And away back you always lived in Rhode Island, didn’t you, mother?”

“Yes,” his mother would say; but one day she added, “unless you go too far back — and then we lived in Wales.”

“Oh, did you? I didn’t know that.”

That night he got Rebecca to help him look up Wales. All proved quite satisfactory. Wales was a nice mountainous country; and the people were fine — great musicians and poets and fighters. King Arthur and his Knights had their Round Table in Wales, at Caerleon. “Mother,” he said to Rebecca, “may really have descended from one of the Knights of the Round Table, in the beginning, you know.”

He told his mother about it, and that he would “think it out,” as soon as he had time. “But that isn’t what we are talking about, mother,” he went on. “It’s after your people had come over to Rhode Island and there was Indian blood in your family. Now, say! The principal Indians in Rhode Island were the Narragansetts, weren’t they?”

“I believe so,” said his mother.

“Well, then, it ‘stands to reason,’ as father says, that we may be Narragansetts. And Miantonimo was the finest of the Narragansetts, so noble and honorable and true — he was *just* like you, mother! I *know* it is Miantonimo’s blood you have in your veins, mother!”

Marmaduke was about nine years old when he settled the facts of his Indian ancestry. And

certainly Miantonimo and Paugus were a very good selection for ancestors.

"White men did sometimes marry squaw-girls in those days, didn't they, father?" he asked one day.

"Probably," Mr. Black answered.

"And just look at yourself, father," Duke went on. "All you need, father, is a blanket and some feathers. You're as dark — and awful tall and straight, with a great nose and high cheek-bones, and you walk very silent! And such charcoaly eyes — you're just as Indiany, father! It's plain you have Indian blood!"

"Well," Mr. Black answered, "we'll say I am an Indian — I'm willing. Perhaps I could pass for one. But you, my son — how about you?"

Then the family had to laugh. And Duke went red all over his face and neck, to the roots of his hair. It had been a sore subject to Duke — his looks! In his very soul he longed to be dark, with a high nose and prominent cheek-bones. But, alas, he was a very blond young Indian! He had a thin, delicate skin, and the sweetest complexion — white and rose; blue eyes, too, and red hair — yes, the golden hair of his babyhood had turned red; but, as it had changed so much, Duke had lately cherished a hope that it might change still more and become dark-brown at least.

His complexion, too, Duke had concluded he could alter somewhat. He chose all kinds of work and sport that exposed him to the weather.

Wind and sun burned his fair skin, and when it healed it was thicker and darker. He helped his father in the hayfield on the hottest days, with his little shirt-sleeves rolled to his shoulders, simply to tan himself; the year before he had become of a fairly good copper hue by August, though he bleached out a good deal during the winter.

His eyes, to be sure, would remain blue. But there was one thing about his blue eyes that Duke himself didn't know — if he had it would have pleased him mightily. When aroused to anger a most terrible look would come into them — yes, his eyes would be fairly terrible. It was not exactly blood, nor exactly fire, that filled them — but a hue, a blaze, of both. Everything shrank from before him. A curious thing, in connection with it, was the fact that his mother had only to say, "Now, be a good child!" and Duke would at once become kind and obliging and reasonable.

Whether this terrible aspect of his eyes at times was a sign of Indian blood, as Rebecca declared, cannot be settled; but his mother thought the feathers in his hats might be. Duke generally had a feather in his hat-band — an upright wild-fowl quill, crow or partridge, or a hawk's. Even from the band of his Sunday hat the soft end of some feather or other peeped out.

II.

BOYS' TALK.

DUKE got up from the table in haste. They heard him going down cellar; and Rebecca and his mother glanced out of the window. "Sammy!" said Rebecca.

Over the old ravine foot-bridge a boy of about Duke's size was coming. It was Sammy Updyke. Sammy's eyes and hair were coal-black, yet somehow he had a very much milder look than Duke. He and Duke were now about twelve years old.

Duke came up two stairs at a step, and went to the door. "Hello! Be out in a minute!"

He came back into the dining-room, took the thick slice of raisin-cake from his plate, looked at the cake-basket as though to take another, but thought better of it as he glanced at his father and mother, colored as he saw Rebecca's eyes fastened on his pockets bulging with apples, then rushed from the house after his usual manner when Sammy Updyke was waiting outside, and was off down the green hill through the trees.

Duke's father sat for some minutes looking

out of the window after the two boys, munching the raisin-cake as they went along the road.

Then he turned back to the table. Mrs. Black had straightened Duke's chair, and rolled his napkin and restored it to its ring. "Why don't you insist," he said, "on Duke's finishing his meals at the table? He eats anywhere and everywhere, just like a young Indian. He's getting utterly uncivilized habits!"

"Well, Robert," Mrs. Black said, "I suppose it ought to be stopped. But he does take so much comfort, and I don't know that there's anything wicked in it. He says he enjoys eating his cake and fruit twice as much outdoors. And where's there any real harm in it?—why not let him? I'm sure," she went on, "I've heard you and John Updyke talk by the hour of the joys of camping-out, and how good the fish tasted rolled in leaves and roasted in hot ashes, and of various other uncivilized food! Why not let the boy have the open-air zest with his crackers and dried beef—even though his pockets are a sight to behold!" she added to herself.

She never could get Duke to turn his pockets and brush them himself!

Rebecca, from her place, could see the boys on the bridge at the corner, leaning on the rail and looking down into the stream. Just then Duke lifted his face up to the sky—a great weather prophet was Duke—and the sun fell full on him, and turned his red hair to a blaze.

"Well, he's an awful good boy, father," she said, "even if he does like to snatch his cake and run."

"And he's aboveboard about things he wants," said his mother. "He loves dainties like a young colt, but he doesn't take his raisins and lump-sugar on the sly."

Rebecca laughed. "No, he doesn't have to, mother." The thrifty Rebecca was vexed about the fruit-can of raisins which always stood on the shelf of the pantry closet where Duke could help himself. This fruit-can of raisins, and the fact that Duke could "go to" anything there was in the house, were great subjects of talk among the neighborhood boys, and various mothers had various opinions about it all.

The boys all liked to go off on tramps with Duke Black; for just when you began to feel tired he always produced something out of his pocket "to chew on," a chip of dried beef, a piece of chocolate, a chunk of maple sugar, or a bay-leaf if nothing else.

"Yes, he's a good boy," said Duke's father; "but I wish his habits were a little different."

Rebecca and her mother moved away from the table. The two boys had gone out of sight, around on the upper road, in among the thickets of young birch and poplar.

Duke's folks seldom asked where he was going. "Me'n Sammy's going off for a walk," he generally called into the house; "up the Sables, maybe."

Duke and Sammy hardly ever started to go anywhere in particular. Duke loved a mountain, and they usually went toward the Sables. Sometimes they tramped for half a day; but home they always came before dark, and Duke's first question was, "You didn't worry about us, did you, mother?"

No, Mrs. Black wasn't a worrying mother. With all his freedom and independence, she could trust Duke to be cautious and careful. He knew very well what it was that would trouble her—a failure to be home by dark; and she could rely upon seeing him making his way up the green hill before daylight had wholly disappeared. It would have been different if Duke had loved to go off with a gun, or down to the river to fish. But Duke was not much of a sportsman. He was a pedestrian, a mountaineer; besides, frequently he and Sammy sat and talked by the hour under a tree, and didn't get very far from home after all.

This particular afternoon Duke and Sammy tramped off mountainward as usual. They thought they should go up Middle Sable.

"I s'pose Indians have been all over here, sometime," said Sammy, as they went along and got into the woods.

"Of course," said Duke. "Indians were everywhere."

"What kind do you s'pose were here?" said Sammy. "What tribe?" Sammy knew about Paugus, and the fight at Lovewell's Pond.

“Umph!” said Duke, fiercely, “that’s what no boy in this town can find out! The library is full of Greeks and Romans, and the Aztecs and the Greenlanders, but not a book to be had about our own New Hampshire Indians! I’ve been through the catalogue. Perhaps there’s something about just Indians, but not a single one about New Hampshire Indians—I can’t find a single book about any single particular New Hampshire chief—just as you can, you know, about Washington and about Lincoln. I want to read about old Passaconaway!”

Sammy did not often go to the library for books, but he had a respect for Duke. “Of course,” said he, “if there’s anything you want to know you ought to be able to get books about it in the town library.”

“Well,” said Duke, “when I grow up, there’ll be plenty of books about our home Indians!”

“I don’t know about that,” said Sammy, after a pause. “Everybody’s dead now that knew about them. That Paugus fight of yours was more than a hundred and fifty years ago!”

“Things can *always* be found out, Sammy,” said Marmaduke, loftily. “They can be dug up out of the ground, if there’s no other way. Just as things were at Pompeii. Say, Sammy, you and I’ll go up to Lovewell’s Pond some day—’t isn’t far, just over the border, in Maine, in Fryeburg.” Duke looked up the old battle, on the map, as often as once a week.

“Great things must have happened sometime

or other on these hills, with Indians living here," said Sammy.

Duke shook his head. "Indians were no climbers. They were walkers. They were always going from place to place. They'd choose flat land, easy walking. And they'd keep to rivers and streams, for they traveled in canoes all they could, and wanted to fish and shoot the deer that came out of the woods to drink and feed on the grass."

Sammy listened with admiration. Duke was a natural Indian — there was no doubt of it!

"Of course," Marmaduke added, "they might have climbed hills some, so as to go into bear-dens for bears, and into caves."

"S'pose there are any caves about here?" asked Sammy.

Marmaduke looked up the steep Sables, thick with tall trees and matted with under-growth. "Nobody can tell but what there are," said he. "I shouldn't wonder."

"I wish we could discover one!" said Sammy.

"Wouldn't it be fine!" said Duke. He gazed again up the shaggy heights. "They'd naturally be near the top where it is rocky."

"So *I* should say," said Sammy. "Anyway, the trees aren't so tall and thick towards the top. Say, why can't we go over to Dilson village where the Sables begin, and go up there somewhere, and go along the summits, and make our way down in at places where it seems wild and rocky, and explore?"

Marmaduke was struck by Sammy's ideas, though he couldn't tell whether they were good ones or not.

"If we could find where there had been an old water-course down in through the rocks and then dried up, 'twould be fine," he said.

"Would that be a cave?" asked Sammy.

"I don't know whether 'twould or not," said Duke. "'Twould be a sort of one. A bear could have had his den in such a place, and an Indian could have slept in it and had a fire. Anyway, we could call it a cave."

"We've got all summer to hunt such places," said Sammy, "till school begins in September. How Crow would like to help hunt — and he's so small he could slide down into holes and see what was there!"

"It's a shame Crow has to work and weed, and have his time all taken up," said Duke.

"We could board at Uncle Henry's," said Sammy; "you know he lives over at the village — for of course we couldn't go home nights. Probably our folks would worry even then — they'd worry now, I s'pose, if they knew we were even talking of it!"

But they kept on talking, and they talked so long that it was about dark before they reached home, and Duke's mother was almost worrying — when suddenly she spied her boy coming up the green hill from the road.

III.

THE LIBRARY BOOK.

BUT Duke and Sammy never made that trip over the summits of the Sables. Marmaduke was a long time in deciding whether the Dilson village plan would do to lay before his mother. He and Sammy had several stormy talks. Sammy never could bear to abandon an idea; while Duke would go into a scheme with the greatest enthusiasm, then draw back to think it over — and drop it. In this case his delay ended in his never telling his mother; something so perfectly delightful happened that there was no need.

The very first talk Duke and Sammy had after the cave talk was the stormiest of all. They had sauntered up in the direction of the Sables, as usual, and sat down for a rest at Scott's corner, under a spreading pine, as often they did — not that they were tired, but because the spot was a "base of supplies."

Having a "base of supplies" was an idea which Marmaduke had got from books on Arctic travels, and Crow and Sammy had agreed with him that it would be a good plan to put various

lots of provisions in various places, so if you lost your way, or went too far before you turned homeward, or if you got tired, you could get something to eat near-by. This plan had been in operation two years.

Duke threw himself down under the tree. Sammy went round the turn, and down under the bridge, quite out of sight. Presently he came up the bank with his hands full of russets.

"Six left," said he. "We're all right for Saturday."

There was hardly a bridge within a circuit of three miles where some beam, or support, or cranny among the stones, had not been converted into a cupboard shelf. Whatever apple, pear or plum was at its prime was sure to be stored here in readiness for a famished boy, together with other eatables that wouldn't rot or mould. Small tin boxes containing chips of preserved ginger, hard candies, raisins, chocolates in tin-foil, educator crackers, dried prunes and apricots, palatable pieces of codfish and smoked halibut, small portions of ground coffee put up as powders, and even cracked wheat and flaked oats folded in the same form, were among the life-preservatives. The plan was a success in every way. It not only could be relied upon to brace up a fellow if tired, but it made tramping a pleasure. No dog, cat, squirrel, bird or boy was ever known to pilfer the stores. No boy, not in the secret, ever found

out that good things to eat were to be had under almost any bridge in town.

While they lay in the shade eating their apples, Sammy said, "What'd your mother say?"

"Haven't told her yet," said Duke.

"Haven't? Why? I've told *my* mother!"

"Have? What'd she say?"

"Said if Mrs. Black thought 'twas right, all right."

"Well, I d'no as I shall tell her at all."

"Why?" asked Sammy, in astonishment.

"'Cause I don't think she'd be willing."

"Why, you said she'd be *sure* to be willing," exclaimed Sammy.

"Yes, I know. But I hadn't thought about it then."

"Well, you're a great fellow!" said Sammy; "make a plan and get anybody all interested — and *then* go to thinking about it, and give it up! Just *like* you!"

Duke couldn't deny that. He had given up more fine schemes than Sammy dreamed of.

"Well," he said, "as I thought about it, I could see mother's objections. I don't think she'd want us to go over to your uncle's and ask them to take us — a couple of boys — to board a week or more, and let us tramp about the mountains. They wouldn't know *when* we'd be in at night. Mother'd say that your aunt'd worry herself to death. She'd say the woods were perfectly pathless and endless. And

even if we blazed trees, like the early settlers, it wouldn't be as if we were going somewhere in particular, and came back with the blazes for a guide; for going down into places hunting for caves we should be turning every which way, and get all mixed up among our hacked trees. And she'd say, if we were down the hill and got lost in the dense woods, we couldn't light a torch and have it show so's anybody could see it. And she'd say, if one of us fell and got hurt—that is, got hurt bad—the other of us mightn't be able to find the way to the village for help, or ever find again the one left behind. Our mothers aren't going to let us take guns along to fire signals—not much! I tell you, Sammy, it's a fool plan, and I don't think I shall say anything about it!"

"You're a great kind of an Indian, aren't you?" said Sammy. "You'd made a fine early settler! You'd been a fine white man to have lived in early times in New Hampshire, wouldn't you?"

"Probably," said Duke, his forehead red. "I want to see a thing as 'tis," he added.

After Sammy had thought for a few minutes, he concluded Duke had seen the cave-hunt as it was, for now he, too, saw it that way. Then he asked himself why his mother hadn't seen the facts, and refused her consent. It troubles a boy to have his mother fall short. Suddenly he pounced on the reason. "It was a way she took to get rid of me—to tell me she had

no objections if Mrs. Black was willing Marmaduke should go. She knew *no* mother would let a boy go!"

Sammy always liked to "get even" with Duke. And to "get even" was in his power now, especially should Duke be feeling that his mother was superior to his own in the matter of good judgment or knowledge, or anything. Their minister had said that Mrs. Updyke was the best informed woman in town. Of that, Sammy was very proud.

"See here," said Sammy, sitting up and flipping his apple seed a ta daisy, "you better study your catalogue before you say there aren't any Indian books in the library!"

"I said books about New Hampshire Indians!"

"Well, about New Hampshire Indians then! I got out a book last night that tells of the very tribe you want to know about — your dear Pig-wackets. You was mourning the other day because you could never know nothing more about 'em after the fight at Lovewell's Pond! I know just where they went."

Duke sat up. "What's the title?" he said, throwing away his apple.

"The title," said Sammy, "is 'Mr. Drake's Indian History for Young Folks.' It's a little, worn-out old book — I guess everybody in town has had it but you!"

"How'd you come to know there was such a book?" asked Duke.

"Oh, mother told me. I said you wished you knew where the Pigwackets went to after the fight at Lovewell's Pond; and she said it was in that book, and told me to tell you it was in the library. I got it for you yesterday."

"Well, where have they gone to?" said Duke, unable to wait for the book, and speaking as though the ancient tribe had left but a week ago.

"Oh," said Sammy, "they went about a hundred and seventy-five years ago up into Canada. I was telling mother about your Indians"—

"See here!" cried Duke, springing to his feet, his blood-and-fire look blazing up in his blue eyes, "you didn't go and tell your mother about my being part Indian?"

Sammy didn't answer for a minute. It was fine to see Duke Black mad! Duke had doubled his fists, his face in a glow, before Sammy spoke.

"Of course not," he said. Sammy knew he was the only boy in town whom Duke had told of his Indian blood. Proud as he was of it, it was his family secret.

The boys started back home. They had thought of going up Middle Sable that afternoon, but it was too late. Besides, Duke wanted to see the Indian history.

Duke got the old book and took it home. He carried it up to his chamber. And after the house was still and all asleep, on page 203—he made a memorandum of the title and page

in his small book of personal concerns, a small, half-used grocer's pass-book — he read that soon after the fight "they withdrew to the sources of the Connecticut River and finally settled in Canada." He got his atlas and surveyed the "sources of the Connecticut River." He wished Mr. Drake had called the tribe "Pigwackets," as he had always heard them called, instead of "Pequawkets," though this no doubt was their book name.

Duke read much in the old book before he returned it. He got a good deal out of it, though he may not have got it wholly straight. "Paugus was well known in the white settlements," said Drake, just as his father had always said. He concluded that the Pigwackets made war against the settlers because they were English, and that they had joined with a Maine tribe that was fighting for its lands secretly urged on by the French. Duke had never before realized that the hatred between the English and the French spoken of in his school history had had anything to do with the old family story of Paugus and Chamberlain. Probably Paugus had fired at Chamberlain with French powder and ball! All the Indians believed that the French had paid them well for their land, but that the English had cheated them out of their country! Duke's eyes blazed up for Paugus and the Pigwackets! What would he and his father do to strange people who should come to claim their farm and take

it? Would they fight? Oh, wouldn't they? And if they depended for meat on the fish in it, would they let strange people dam up their own little branch of the Merrimack and build a great mill and fill the water with sawdust and poison the fish? Would they?

Such were the indignant questions Duke addressed to his mother.

"You must read a great deal of history, if you want the truth," said Mrs. Black. "Many say the English kings instructed those who came over here to pay the Indians for the land, and that they did, and that the Indians didn't know the meaning of a deed, and that the children of these Indians grew up and denied the sales."

"Was it so?" demanded Duke, of his father."

"I don't know," said Mr. Black.

"I'll bet 'twasn't!" said Duke. "I wish the early settlers had never come! The Indians would have been living here in peace!"

Rebecca caught his arm as he went out. "What a crazy, frantic little fellow you are!" she said. "Don't you know the English found the tribes here at war with one another?"

Duke flung away. "That's just something you've read! After I'm educated I'll look into these matters, Rebecca Chamberlain!"

When Duke was vexed at his sister he called her "Rebecca Chamberlain!"

IV.

ON MIDDLE SABLE.

BUT Saturday they did go up the Sables. Crow was along — Crow Christopher. One might fancy from his name that the boy was dark ; but “ Crow ” was simply short and easy for “ Croydon,” and he was small, and pale, with mouse-colored hair, much more like some domestic little bird than a crow.

Still there was nothing particularly tame and gentle about Crow Christopher. In their three-cornered disputes he was often the last to yield. But you never could tell which he would do — yield or hold out ! Sometimes when Duke and Sammy didn't seem to think it worth while to contend, little Crow would have spilled the last drop of his blood before he would have yielded what seemed to him plain fact. At other times, when Duke and Sammy would sit under a tree and argue hotly half a day, he was content to lie on the ground and chew a blade of grass ; and if they appealed he was quite likely to say, “ Perhaps so ; perhaps so. Only I can't see that it makes any difference either way.”

This means that some things were very important to little Crow and others were not.

Crow was two years younger than Duke and Sammy, but they liked to have him along. His home and prospects were very different from theirs. He was thoroughly devoted to the two boys — little Crow had a perfectly startling capacity for being loyal, and for sticking to a promise. Yes, “startling” is the word that describes this trait in him, as you will see for yourselves.

And Crow was another “mother-boy” — the same as Duke and Sammy, but with a difference. Sammy was proud of his mother’s superiority; and Duke loved his because she was so dear and loving herself; and little Crow was his mother’s counsellor — the man of the house in ways you would never expect a boy ten years old to be. He knew as much as any lawyer about that ill piece of business known as “mortgage and foreclosure,” and carried that clogging weight called “semi-annual interest” around in his bits of boots, so to speak. So the gay comradeship of Duke and Sammy was such a restful blessing to him as those two haphazard boys never dreamed.

With their resources of pocket-money and their mothers’ pantries, Duke and Sammy never guessed how the proud and honorable desire to “do his part” weighed on little Crow; nor the pleasure with which the little fellow handed

out a couple of spring delicacies that Saturday as they went up the old road.

"Have some?" carelessly said Crow.

"Hello!" Duke helped himself lavishly from the double-handful of young wintergreen leaves. "First I've seen this year — where d'you get 'em?"

"Down in your meadow," said Crow. "The bank by the cowslips is just red with 'em." From his other pocket he drew out a bundle of tender white sweet-flag sprouts, still folded close in their green outside sheaths.

As a treat, nothing was left to be desired; and right at the mossy rise of the meadow, where they always struck in to go up Middle Sable, was the old ever-living spring where the boys loved to drink. The rusty dipper lay in the wet moss, bottom-side up, as they always left it. You crave water after wintergreens.

Though they invariably went up from that point, whenever they climbed Middle Sable, there was still no visible path. They preferred it thus. Duke's Indian blood rejoiced in a blind trail.

There were a few large trees just beyond the spring, and then you stepped right into a dense growth of maple saplings. These you parted with your arms as you climbed.

The growth was nearly as impenetrable and hot as a cane-brake. Years before the timber had been cut, and now all this lower section of the Sable range was thick with sprout-wood and

seed-saplings. But to the boys — and so far as they knew no one else ever went up — the struggle, the push, the stride, the slipping foothold, the long-armed pull upward, made the joy of the half-mile climb.

From this hot thicket they emerged into a vast open hemlock tangle, where foothold was very slippery and precarious. They never wandered much away from the good seat that lay a little distance up — a flat rock under a great spreading tree — the “cupboard-tree.” They generally felt they had had adventure sufficient by the time they reached it.

There they usually sat for hours. They could look upward into the blue sky, and down upon a dense forest of green maple-top, and out upon villages crested with church spires, and far away upon vague blue mountain shapes. Each time they came up they hailed these far mountain forms with the joy of explorers and discoverers.

“Hurrah! there’s the Uncanoonucs!” Sammy would shout, as surprised as though never before had he seen the twin peaks.

“Hello! there you are!” would cry Duke to the nameless east ranges; some days these were heavenly blue mountains, on others like lovely, vaporous cloud-banks.

The one long, low-lying, grand mountain of their own region lay couching near in the north. It was said that from its bare summit, on a clear day, could be seen the crystal whiteness of Mt.

Washington; and to the east, off Portsmouth, a line of blueness, unlike all other blueness — the ocean! When Duke and Sammy should be fourteen, they had been promised the climb, with a great spyglass, and a bonfire at night, where they should sleep, they and little Crow, Indian fashion, in a circle, their toes to the coals! And like Indians they were to make the ascent, each boy with his blanket and provisions in a pack on his back.

In fact, if all three had not had in them this streak of madness for a mountain horizon, they might long before have made a very delightful discovery on their own Middle Sable.

They were sitting on the rock now, under the tree, their chins in their hands, resting.

"I wish there *was* a cave we could have to go into!" said Duke suddenly, as if they had just been talking of caves.

"Mother thinks very likely there are caves on High Sable," said Sammy. "But they'd be stopped up with stuff, if there were any. We never'd find one!"

"Nobody said they expected to find a cave with a nice hinged front door!" said Duke. "I'd like the fun of digging the way in!"

"We can't tell what's in among this hemlock stuff right here," said Crow. "You know how you went down out of sight, last summer, Duke."

Duke remembered. He had stepped plump down through an old hemlock tangle seven feet!

It might have been tough work ever getting back if he had been alone.

He rose and stood on the rock, Sammy and Crow, too, and looked off to the right and to the left. Nobody could be sure as far as eye could reach of touching solid ground.

"I think," said Crow, stretching up his neck and looking about brightly, much like a hopeful spring bird just arrived from the south, "we might make a search."

"You little grasshopper!" laughed Duke, looking down on him, "you'd be in out of sight somewhere in less than five minutes."

"I've been everywhere you and Sammy have been," piped up Crow, "and 'twas *you* got in out of sight, Duke!" Then Sammy laughed at Duke.

"But what I was going to say," went on little Crow manfully, "was that we might have some long, stout poles and prod around. We could stick the pole in before we stepped."

"That's so, my son," said Duke. "'Twould be slow, but 'twould be sure. We'll do it."

But they saw no trees which they could cut for walking poles with their jack-knives. Duke had at home a ferocious sheath-knife, a regular hunter's knife. It was the pride of his heart, and he would have worn it in his belt everywhere he went if it would not have distressed his mother. She had asked him to promise never to wear it up the Sables. He had told her one day how slippery the hemlock made the

footing among the rocks; 'twas then she said, "Supposing you should slip and fall on that knife, Duke! and supposing it should cut through the sheath and stab into you!"

So the knife lay for the most part in his upper bureau drawer, its chief use to be taken out and flourished before the mirror in the murderous moves and lunges which Duke called "fencing"—it would have made any mother sick to see it! Duke himself couldn't answer when his mother asked what he wanted of such a knife. He really couldn't think of anything he ever would use it for.

"I just wanted it. I just wanted to own such a knife," he said; for Duke always answered his mother, he never evaded her questions, but came out with the truth as he saw it.

It was a little hard to have the knife, and never wear it. But his father had settled that at the outset. "About the worst use you could put that knife to," said he, "would be to worry your mother with it."

"Father," laughed Rebecca, after Duke had gone up stairs, "don't you know that Duke will never do any harm with that knife? Don't you know *you* have to kill all the chickens for mother to cook?"

The register over the kitchen stove opened up into Duke's room. It wasn't closed, and Duke heard this. And Rebecca went on: "He's just as soft-hearted! That knife is nothing but one of his dear, funny Indian traits!"

Then the whole family laughed — his father and mother and Rebecca. Duke turned red and hot and “mad.” Still he wasn’t ashamed of laying away the knife, to please his mother.

“Well,” he said to the boys, “let’s go down. We’ll cut some good hickory poles in your woods, Sammy, and Monday we’ll come up here armed.”

Then they unbuttoned the little leather latch of the trap-door in the tree, and from the hole they had dug in the wood with their knives at various times when they had been sitting on the rock, they took out a small roll of sliced dried beef, and ate part of it, and put the rest back. It was a solemn rule never to eat all of the store in the cupboard-tree, or elsewhere, lest in some desperate need there would be no mouthful at hand to preserve life.

Then downward they plunged to the spring in the moss.

V.

THE FRONT DOOR OF THE CAVE.

THE boys were usually half an hour going up from the spring to the cupboard-tree. But Monday they were an hour. It was slow work getting through the saplings, carrying the long prodding poles. One was almost certain to hit the fellow in front of him, or the one behind, for the saplings would close in and knock the pole to one side or the other. All in one grand moment of ill-luck Sammy stumbled and Duke tripped over the back end of Sammy's pole, while his own flew up behind and would have put out one of little Crow's blue eyes had Crow been an inch taller; as it happened, it only punched a hole in his straw hat with one end, while with the other it gave Sammy a sharp dig in the back.

But at last they came out, and got up through the hemlock scrub to the seat on the rock. There they threw their hats on the ground, wiped their wet faces, and proceeded at once to the business of the moment, which was to eat some figs, and stow away in their pockets some chocolate from the cupboard.

Then Duke directed the start. All three were to go to the right, work along independent of each other, though keeping as near together as practicable, and call loud and often. In case one got a fall, or "stepped in out of sight," he was to shout and rear up his pole as high as he could. In case one was killed, or disappeared entirely, the others were to leave off prodding for a cave and hunt until they found him; in no case must they go home without him, for that would scare their mothers to death. While if they were not back by dark their fathers would come with lanterns to see what the matter was, and then stay and join in the search. Their families knew where they were, and that the path was a straight line from the spring in the moss to a big tree up in the hemlock tangle.

Sammy declared there was so much of the directions they couldn't be remembered. "If I set myself up as the leader," he said, "I'd" —

"You'd what?" cried Duke, glaring at him. "Supposing you give the directions!"

"So I will," said Sammy. "Keep in hearing! Keep in sight! If you fall in, holler and keep your stick up! If you are killed let it be known at once!"

"That's enough, Sammy!" cried out Crow, interrupting. He had seen a wicked grin beginning to spread on Duke's face. "Hurrah! now for the cave! I'm off!"

Off they all moved in the search for an un-

known cave, which, according to their expectations, would only be found after many expeditions, and after many hard bumps and thumps, many thrilling trippings and slippings, many perilous descents into dark and dangerous places.

What did happen was much more surprising. The boys found a cave in about an hour after little Crow hurrahed and started ahead, and a very satisfactory one, too.

Crow thought *he* would start for some particular point — he would be more likely to not get lost! So he chose a prominent mass in the distance that he had often noticed. Duke had said it probably was a scraggly old fallen hemlock tree, overgrown with other thick hemlock stuff. Anyway, it was a distinct landmark, and he chose it and was off.

Crow's pole was about three times as tall as he. He went forward, setting it down in front each time before he stepped, and poking about with it to the right and the left. Sometimes he could take a dozen steps on good ground. Sometimes he stood upon a rock a long time, prodding for a safe place in a hole that seemed too deep to go down into. Once he stuck his pole in to swing himself across to another rock, but it whirled and brought him face down upon a horrid scrub; and he scrambled up with a bloody nose and a bruised eye.

The big boys saw nothing of this leaping fall which might have brought the mouse-haired

little head crash upon a hidden rock! But Crow saw both at some distance among the hemlock. He called out, cheering, and scrambled ahead. He was luckier after that in getting good footholds and finding flat rocks. The ground seemed to be covered with them under the old hemlock shag. Sometimes he called to Duke, sometimes to Sammy, "Found a cave yet?"

No. Duke had found one big rock with several clefts and fissures, none of them too deep for him to stand in with his head out in the daylight.

"Regular old hemlock quagmire!" shouted Sammy.

"Regular old Kipling jungle!" shouted Duke. "What do you call it, Grasshopper?"

"Fun! fun! fun!" shouted back Crow, giving a careless hop that brought him, knee down, on a rock.

Duke and Sammy didn't see this accident either. Crow heard their voices in the distance — perhaps they had mishaps of their own to attend to! But when he tried to rise he was afraid he had broken the knee-pan. For a bad minute the little fellow wondered if Duke and Sammy would ever be able to help him home, down through the saplings. But he straightened up and found he could stand, and step too.

It was but a very little distance on that he noticed that he was walking on smooth stone under the hemlock litter. He was coming

quite near the mass of the big fallen tree, or whatever it might be. It seemed to have towered up prodigiously while he was down on his knee.

He stepped along, using his pole to find what it was he was walking upon — a long ledge, bare of earth. Suddenly he seemed to be in the midst of rocks, big ones, tumbled about at all angles. Step by step, with his trusty pole, he got footholds and went on, winding about and going higher, right into the face of the old hemlock mass — which might be only a great fallen tree, though Crow didn't believe it was. Hello! what was this?

Crow had passed in behind some tall upturned scraggly roots and stepped upon an oblong rock as much as thirty feet long, rising almost straight up four or five feet high, while over it, like a roof, but slanting up instead of downward, jutted out from the hill-side another mighty rock taking it well within its shadow. He stooped and looked down into a dark chasm.

It was difficult for little Crow to keep a good grasp upon himself and not shout.

He crouched on the long rock a few moments until his dizziness passed. Then he dropped one leg over outside, by which to steady himself, and hold fast, and thrust his pole down into the opening.

"All right," said Crow, triumphant, and drew out his pole, and braced himself in his seat still more firmly, by driving it down in the hemlock outside.

Then he took his chocolate out and was eating it, when he heard the boys. "Crow? Crow? Crow! Crow!"

Crow filled his lungs and piped forth mightily:

"All right! All right! Co-o-ome here! Come here! here! here!"

Through an opening in the hemlock scrag, he could see them poling themselves along, looking for him in all directions.

He called again. "All right! Here! Here!" And then he yodeled!

The boys answered and came on, though they couldn't see him. Presently they were out of sight, but he could hear them.

They were winding in among the big rocks.

"Crow? Where are you?"

"Here!" said Crow, laughing. "Come in behind here!"

Oh, it was a great moment for little Crow when Duke and Sammy came around in full view, and beheld him on his perch, and gazed with open mouths at the great rock-opening!

"How's this for a front door?" cried he.

VI.

“’TIS A CAVE.”

DUKE and Sammy made their way along to the place where Crow sat, regarding them with a funny lift of his head. They dropped down by his side; and they, too, threw a leg over the outer edge of the rock, though it was a very good seat, in a boy's estimation, being about two feet wide. Then both ran their poles down the opening.

“It's a door to something or other, Grasshopper, that's sure!” said Duke.

Sammy looked over in, as far as the steep roof-slant permitted. “By mighty!” he said, under breath, and choking on the last word, as he thought what if his mother were there to hear him; this truly was the nearest and the only approach to forbidden forms of speech which Sammy Updyke had ever made.

Duke got down and gazed in for some time. Soon Crow was there too. As far down as the boys could see, the big upper stone slanted along backward. The front stone, on which they lay, seemed to go straight downward.

“Sammy,” said Duke, “you and Crow get back there and hold on to my legs, and let me put my head down in as far as I can.”

"Yes," said Sammy, obeying orders; "you'll see everything there is to see. Your hair'll light it up fine."

Duke hung his bright head over in, and peered about. Then he got back on the rock. "I think it's straight up and down, and not very far below there seems to be some more stone sticking out. Let's go down in."

Sammy didn't seem to incline to do this. "I don't think we better," he said.

"I thought you were anxious to find a cave!" cried Duke. "Get away — I'll go in alone." And he began to turn around preparatory to sliding, or dropping, or getting down in some form or other.

Little Crow came shoving along. "If Duke's going," he said, "I'm going!"

"All right," said Duke. "You wait till I get down onto that stone. Then I'll light a match and look in farther."

"Oh, if you're going, if you haven't any common sense," said Sammy, "of course I shall go too. But how d'you know where this hole drops to? How d'you know it isn't a den — how d'you know there isn't a bear down there, or a wolf, to welcome you?"

"I *don't* know," retorted Duke. "But I'll go down and see, and call up and tell you, Sammy; you stay where it's safe, Sammy, till I call."

Duke went down, breast to the front rock, half letting himself go, half clinging to the rough stone with arms and knees, until his feet

touched the stone below. The mouth of the entrance was really not very much over an arm's-length above. The stone on which he stood was quite broad. By a good jump he could catch hold and draw himself up and out.

Calling for his pole, cautiously he turned and looked about. It was not so very, very dark — some of the daylight above came in; but he took a match from his pocket and scratched it — he and Sammy and Crow had a rule never to be without two or three matches.

There was another step below — another spur of the ledge cropping out; and this stone seemed to spread on out of sight.

“Come along down, Sammy!” he cried, his ill-humor gone. “There’s a good floor — you won’t drop into any cistern! Come along down with your matches, both of you — only see that Crow don’t drop too sudden — for it’s about a straight fall — you come first!”

By this time he had another match lighted, and was looking at the roof rock. It seemed to have changed its slant somewhat and strike off in more level fashion.

The boys came dropping and scrambling to his side.

“Gracious, ’tis a cave!” said Sammy.

To Duke’s joy, Sammy had a full box of matches.

“Let’s all light one at the same time,” said Crow, “and get a good look.”

“All right,” said Duke. “It’s your cave, Crow.”

So they struck three matches, and by stooping could walk along from the lower step very well. The space seemed to be just a passage at first. Then all at once it widened out, and squared itself into quite a good-sized place, where a dozen people could stand upright. The roof seemed level, and at the same time the floor sloped downward somewhat.

They went forward fifteen or twenty feet, lighting matches as needed. Then the roof began to slant again, so that Sammy and Duke could no longer stand upright, and the sides to become irregular and jutting.

Here they paused to take a look about. The place did not seem at all dangerous or mysterious. There were no nooks for lurking. Old brown hemlock needles, twigs, and dry earthy stuff, had sifted in and covered the rocky floor. Otherwise, it appeared empty from the creation of the world, and never to have afforded shelter for any living creature. There was not to be seen so much as a lock of squirrel fur — not even the quill of a hedgehog! But suddenly Crow cried out. He had been stepping along one side of the cave, and had just come upon a flat jut of rock, about a foot from the floor, and four feet or so above it, another projection, hood-like. He was lighting matches now, and examining the spot.

“Duke! Duke!” he cried, “there have been human beings here, and they have had a fire! See, here’s ashes!”

Sammy and Duke rushed over. Yes, on the

natural hearth lay ashes, ancient ashes. They stood in silence a minute. Sammy looked almost scared.

Then Duke spoke. “Well,” said he, “if this isn’t right jolly! If a fire’ll burn and draw here for one person, it will for another! Won’t we just have times here! Of course,” he went on, as they peered under the hood-like projection, “we couldn’t see anything, anyway; but there’s draughts up through the crevices into the outside world, or a fire wouldn’t have burned! If I don’t roast apples and corn and potatoes on this hearth this fall, my name isn’t Marmaduke Paugus Chamberlain Black! Come, let’s go—I want to tell mother!”

With a whoop that would have done credit to the ancient Pigwackets, Duke led the way back to the entrance. Then, by various springings and leapings and scramblings, and reaching down for Crow, they were finally outside once more, and picking and poling and prodding their way back to the cupboard-tree, ready for the descent; the happiest three boys in town, in possession of the finest secret they ever had had, and full of anticipations of fun!

“Crow,” said Duke once more, “it’s *your* cave! It’s to be called Crow’s cave.”

But it was many a long day before Crow saw the cave again!

VII.

CROW'S HOME.

FOR such a little fellow, it was remarkable how much money Crow Christopher had earned since his father died, and the great things he had done with it. At that time he took his place as the man of the house. Some boys at the age of nine have in them the making of a head of the family, and some haven't.

Crow's father had come into town a couple of years before, and bought a green bit of land with three lovely elm-trees on it, and built a pretty little shingle-house with a simple veranda around it, and stained it brown-yellow and forest-green. There was left just enough land for a garden at the back, with green turf at the sides and the front, and the group of elm-trees. When all was done, it was a dainty home, with its pretty cool colors and its shady veranda, and the bowery elms shutting off the excess of sunshine in summer-time. Such a day-laborer's home had never before been seen in the town. But Mr. Christopher was a very able day-laborer, and said that in three years he could save up the three hundred

dollars he had had to borrow, and anyway he had six years in which to pay it. But in one year he was dead, and little Crow was the head of the house, and the money, which had been saved to pay on the mortgage, had to be used in another way.

But Mr. Glenn, the man who held the mortgage on their pretty home, could not take it away from them for six years if they paid him the interest on the three hundred dollars; and never, if the full sum was paid by that time.

This, little Crow's mother explained to him very fully the day after the funeral. And little Crow loved his home so dearly that he was able to understand every particular of the business.

"I'm sorry now," said Mrs. Christopher, "that we didn't rent a little place, instead of building. Then there would have been no debt."

Then it was, when she said the same thing again, mournfully, the next day, that little Crow showed how well he understood.

"Oh, *I* am not sorry," said he; "I guess I'm not! I couldn't work to pay rent with a good courage, 'cause, mother, the money would be paid away and gone. And you could keep doing it and doing it, and never have anything — no, not if you had worked and paid it ten years. But I shall have a good courage to work to pay on that mortgage, because, every time we pay, the house will get to be more ours — and all the time we can be a-living in its

beauty!" Crow's blue eyes shone with love for his home.

Crow's mother wondered if her little boy had any idea of how he could earn money, and she asked him.

"Yes," he said. "There are things a boy can do as well as a man can do them though he can't ask the same price an hour. I can get gardens to weed. I can get Mr. Black's garden, for Duke hates to weed; and Mr. Black always loses his temper when he has to take his hired man off the farm-work and put him on the weeding, and I know Mr. Black'll have me — but I shall charge him ten cents an hour, and Mr. Black'll be willing to pay it. I know Mrs. Black will anyway, when she sees the garden. Perhaps he'll have me ride the horse to cultivate, for I am light. Mother, I think I can get a good deal of riding to cultivate, for I am so light! And there's Mr. Updyke's cows — you know they change them about into so many pastures, and they have to be brought night and morning, and Sammy hasn't got his dog trained yet to bring 'em, and Sammy has to go every time — I know Sammy would be glad to pay a boy to do it; and Mr. Glenn, mother — don't you think when Mr. Glenn finds we are going to work just as father did, to pay off the mortgage, that he'll give me work? Tom's going away to school in the fall, and there'll be all the errands to the village. Old Mr. Glenn wants his paper every

morning, and Tom won't be there to go down on his wheel. And maybe Mrs. Glenn would like to have me in the house in haying and harvesting, to save her steps — I should think she would — you know I'm handy in the house, mother!"

"I should say you were!" Mrs. Christopher pulled the smooth, mousey little head down on her arm and kissed it. She had been lost in wonder as Crow talked on, bringing forward one thing after another that a boy of nine could do.

"I can do it all, mother," Crow went on, "if you can get me a permit to be absent from school, except in the winter term, because you need me, as Mrs. Dillenbeck does for Delia. Then I should be pretty sure I could earn the interest and something on the principal."

Crow's mother did not doubt that he could. None of the work was harder than he was able to do, and she thought, too, that he could get it.

"And I can keep up the regular annual payments," she said. "I guess your mother's good to save fifty dollars a year, my little boy — washing and sewing."

Crow groaned in his manly child-heart. He couldn't endure that his little mother should go about into people's kitchens to wash! "*I think* I shall earn much more than the interest!" he said again.

It turned out that Crow had calculated with

very good judgment on the need for boy's labor in the neighborhood, and that his work gave such satisfaction that he really did earn the interest money and something over. Everybody liked the plucky little fellow who never played when he could get a job to do; though, for that matter, he often had a day to be off with Marmaduke Black and Sammy Updyke.

Crow's mother didn't succeed so well. She fell short with her "payments on the principal." She couldn't "do washings." At the end of a month she gave up the work. Nor could she "do ironing." She had to give that up too. She could make "company cake," she could do light sewing, and she could take fruit to can and pickles to make. But she could not save fifty dollars a year—at the end of the year she had paid but twenty-five dollars on the mortgage instead of fifty.

The day before the cave discovery, Crow had had a bit of good news. Duke had told him that his father thought he could "rake after" in haying, and that meant "dollar-a-day" wages!

Crow had saved the news and the cave exploit to tell at breakfast. He enjoyed having something pleasant to recount to his mother at the breakfast table. And he had long ago learned that it was particularly agreeable to her to see that he stood high with Marmaduke Black and Sammy Updyke. She liked to see him with those boys. Nothing was more to her mind than to have Crow spending an

evening at Mr. Black's. He would be up in Duke's room, and Duke would read aloud from his books the things he himself enjoyed — such as "Paul Revere's Ride," and "Horatius at the Bridge." One night he had told Crow the story of Lovewell's Pond and the fight between Chamberlain and Paugus, and that he was a "relative" to that Chamberlain — just what relation he didn't know, only his great-great-grandmother was a Chamberlain, and Rebecca was "named after her" — and that he hated them all because one of them had killed the great and formidable Paugus, one of the ancient, original, lawful owners of the country. "The Chamberlains simply came over from England!" he said.

He didn't tell Crow that it was believed that his family had Indian blood in their veins — Sammy Updyke was his only confidant on that point. But he brought the atlas, and pointed out the very spot where the famous Pigwacket fight took place, and told him that they were going on a carriage ride up through Maine, perhaps next summer, and that he intended to walk entirely around Lovewell's Pond.

VIII.

GRAN'DAD'S WINDOW.

THE day after the great discovery on Middle Sable, Crow went up to the Glenn farm in the afternoon before it was time to bring the cows from the pasture. He visited the vegetable garden, and then came along to Mrs. Glenn's flower garden near the house. It had been a fine growing time for weeds, warm and showery, and he had no notion of letting them get ahead of him.

It was very still around the place. Crow had a feeling that nobody was at home, unless it was old Mr. Glenn — Gran'dad, as Tom called him. Crow knew Gran'dad's habits pretty well; he was usually asleep at this time of day. Crow was always rather glad to find him asleep. Gran'dad Glenn had the most piercing black eyes ever seen under heavy white eyebrows.

The small single carriage was gone. Tom was nowhere about. Even Wolf, the dog, was gone. The kitchen door and the sitting-room door and windows were closed; only Gran'dad's window was open. Gran'dad slept with it open night and day, summer or winter.

Crow came along the grass path by the house, under the open window; and naturally his eye turned that way. As he saw the thing that was being done within he stopped dead still, as if he had frozen stiff. He didn't move, nor call out. He could not have passed on to save his life. There lay Gran'dad, on his bed, asleep. There stood Tom, and with him Burt James, at Gran'dad's open desk. Their backs were toward the window, but Crow knew who they were, and he saw Tom stealthily pull out a small drawer and take Gran'dad's pocket-book, lay open the flaps of the bill-compartment, and remove a couple of bank-notes.

As Tom placed the pocket-book back and noiselessly closed the drawer he turned and saw little Crow Christopher standing outside the window, looking in, his eyes and mouth wide open with astonishment!

For a second, with his face turning gray, he stood still before the little fellow's look of utter wonderment and growing horror.

"Quick!" whispered Burt, and with the silence of a cat was out of the window, his grasp closing on Crow's arm. In the same breath Tom was with him, and Crow was being hurried along the grove path to the old pine ravine.

As for little Crow he was in a dead fright. Neither Tom nor Burt spoke to him. He glanced up first at Tom, then at Burt. They were of the "big boys" of the town. Tom was at least fifteen, and Burt was as old.

They plunged off with him among the pines, and there they let go his arms, at last. Tom stood and looked down at him, full in the face; and Crow looked up, full in the face, too, with a gaze from which Tom had to turn.

"You'll stand by me, Burt," he said, after a minute, in a husky voice, speaking low, "no matter what I have to do?"

"Of course," said the other. "Aren't we both in the same box?"

Tom turned back, and cleared his throat. There is no denying that the words came hard. Tom had always liked the clear-minded, upright, energetic little fellow.

Crow was still looking up at him, in wonder. "Well, Crow," said he, "you are in pretty business — spying into my grandfather's room. What were you there for?"

"I wasn't spying, Tom," said Crow in his shrill little voice. "I don't know why I stopped there, but I wasn't spying."

"No, Tom," sneered Burt; "probably he didn't stop to spy — he was going to play thief."

A look of relief spread over Tom's face at Burt's hint.

"Oh, that's all plain enough," he said. "But I wanted to see what he would say. Lucky for you, you young cub, that we were there to prevent you! I suppose you thought you could rob Gran'dad's pocket-book and then, if the loss was discovered, lay it upon some one in the house — no doubt you'd say that you were pass-

ing the window and saw it done! Oh," added Tom, growing wickeder as he went on, "I don't know *what* we'll do with you! I don't know what we *ought* to do with you — you little cub that everybody trusted!"

"You better wait until to-morrow and think it over," said Burt. "Of course something will need to be done."

Tom took this as a hint not to be rash, to take time to do a safe and sure thing. He was in a sweat of terror for his own safety from exposure, and it was hard to think out the matter clearly. They must make sure that the little boy would be on hand when they wanted him, should they let him go; also that meantime he would keep silence. He musn't breathe a word to Marmaduke Black and Sammy Updyke; he musn't go to Mr. and Mrs. Black with it; he mustn't tell his mother either. He mustn't go to anybody whatever. Tom was fast growing a villain, but he knew very well he wouldn't be able to manage a questioning neighborhood of grown men and women!

A thought popped into his head; and Tom during the last hour had become an adept in making immediate use of a wicked thought.

"And my father has been so good to them!" he said to Burt. "Mrs. Christopher hasn't been able to keep up her payments on the mortgage on her place — but never a word has father said; just let her pay at her convenience. And now look how this little cub — see here,

Crow, unless you want your mother turned out of house and home you'll keep mighty quiet about this business! One word to your mother or anybody, and out you'll go, and your mother won't have a roof over her head — remember, now! Let me see! I can't say just how we may think best to finally settle this matter! Look here! every morning at ten o'clock, after you get folks's chores done, you come to this spot! If we've decided what we'll do, we'll meet you here. You appear every morning until we do meet you! Anyhow, you know the consequences to your mother unless you keep your mouth shut! Your mother, no doubt, is a good woman — but you — little spy!"

Tom turned on his heel and Burt followed him, and little Crow was left standing in the pine ravine.

What passed in his manly little soul the next hour Croydon Christopher has never told to this day. We can only judge from results. Whatever resolves he made proved, in the end, to be wise ones. He probably had meant to go to Mr. and Mrs. Black, but, if so, this plan he abandoned. The boys hadn't said that he stole the money, but he must have concluded that they would, should he speak of what he had seen. Who would *not* believe *them*, should the bank-notes be missed, and they declare that they had caught him at Gran'dad's window? Who *would* believe *him*, should he tell what he had witnessed? Even had he gone away from

the window undiscovered, he might not have confided the scene in Gran'dad's room to his mother; it would have worried her, and it was not a matter that they could set right, or ought to meddle with. Much less could he tell now. He had no doubt that if he should his mother's home would be taken from her, as Tom had threatened.

At five o'clock, the hour when he generally went up to bring the Glenn cows to the yard, Gran'dad sat on the veranda, reading his paper. Mr. and Mrs. Glenn were at home. Wolf came up, wagging his tail. Tom stood in the barn-door. "Hello, Crow!" he called, as usual.

IX.

PLANNING PUNISHMENT FOR CROW.

AT ten, next morning, poor little Crow was at the ravine. He had seen Tom when he went up to drive the cows to pasture; but Tom had said nothing, and didn't appear at the ravine. So after waiting an hour Crow went home, and worked all day in his mother's garden. The next day it was the same, except that he weeded in Mr. Black's garden. Crow's bewilderment was such that at night he fell into a sort of stupid, heavy sleep, and slept all night; and this saved the little fellow from breaking down under his troubles. He had seen Duke and Sammy. They wanted to go up to the cave, but Crow said he would have to work hard all the next fortnight. He worked late and started very early, and his mother saw little of him.

The next Monday, as he stood waiting, Crow saw the two boys coming down the ravine. He began to shiver — not with fright, but because the suspense was going to be ended. Tom was whistling; as they came up, he spoke to Crow. "See here, you! have you opened your lips to your mother?"

Crow shook his head.

"Well, you better not. My father and I are coming down to your house this afternoon; and whatever he proposes, you want to agree to, and act glad about it, too, if you wish to keep a roof over your mother's head!"

And then, hands in pocket, whistling, the boys went along. "You did it all right! you've got him!" said Bert.

"I hope so!" said Tom. "If Gran'dad ever should hear of it, there'd be no holding him in — good-by for Tom Glenn to railroad shares, mining stocks, and bank-books! It's got to be done! And 'twon't be such a bad thing for Crow — anyway, we've got to put it though. If Crow should blurt out the truth, father wouldn't believe him — do you think he would?"

"No, indeed."

With Bert's ready help whenever he came to a weak spot, Tom had had a talk with his father that settled little Crow's fate in more ways than one — and Tom's, too, for that matter. The talk had been held at the barn, on the evening after "Crow's burglary," as Tom and Bert jocosely had begun to speak of the scene at Gran'dad's window.

Tom had dreaded the talk, for Tom never had been a liar. But the ease with which he laid the matter before his father had been a surprise, even to himself. The three sitting on the work-bench together, it had been confided to Mr. Glenn that little Crow Christopher had taken

advantage of everybody's absence from the house, and Gran'dad's window being open, to enter Gran'dad's room when he was asleep, and had gone to Gran'dad's desk, and was in the very act of taking some money, when they caught him, and, beckoning him with threatening gestures noiselessly out of the window, led him off, and gave him a good talking-to, and bound him to report himself to them every day.

"We thought, you know, Mr. Glenn," Bert had explained, "that the first thing was not to disturb old Mr. Glenn. We knew that would be the end of his feeling safe alone in the house, or ever daring to leave his window up."

"And you know, father," Tom had added, "that Gran'dad thinks he can't sleep, either summer or winter, with his window closed."

Mr. Glenn had listened to the tale with utter astonishment — little Crow Christopher — that industrious little blue-eyed boy! Yet he could not but appreciate the remarkable judgment and thoughtfulness displayed by the boys. They had saved no end of trouble for his aged father and the whole household.

"That was right, that was well done," he said. "What did you say you did with Crow?"

"Well, sir," Bert had said, as he saw that Mr. Glenn's complete confidence in their account had rather staggered Tom. "We took him off, and gave him a good frightening so that he wouldn't dare make a move until you had decided what best be said or done."

"For you see," Tom had said, "there's his mother. Mrs. Christopher's a nice woman, and 'twould be pretty hard for her to find Crow had been caught burglaring. We thought we'd best talk with you, father."

"He must be a sly little villain," then Bert had said, helping Tom along, seeing how often he paused; "nobody ever would suspect him, and so he may do the same sort of thing again, at any of our houses where he is trusted and allowed to go all over the place. He ought to be scared out of thinking he can do such things by a pretty good lesson — I don't know but he ought to be sent out of town."

Here Tom had taken up the plan. "We don't, any of us, want to hurt the little fellow, you know, father; and if he's well punished he'll prob'ly reform; and we don't want to make his mother trouble. If he's shut up he can't earn money for her. I'll tell you what I've thought of, father. You might do *this* way."

And here Tom had laid a plan before his father, to which Mr. Glenn presently agreed, for it seemed to promise very well indeed.

And then he had gone in and written a letter for Tom to take down to the village for the early mail the next morning.

The answer to this letter had arrived the morning on which the boys finally kept their appointment with poor little Crow.

X

THE TEN-O'CLOCK EXPRESS.

MONDAY afternoon Mrs. Christopher received a call from Mr. Glenn and his son Tom. Crow was at home, weeding, and came in. Tom greeted him jovially, "Pretty hot day for weeding! Glad you took father's garden off my hands this summer!"

Crow stared, with a sickly sort of smile. His face hadn't any kind of expression. He sat down in a corner chair where the vines outside made the light dim, and Tom took a chair nearby.

Then Mr. Glenn, who could not forbear a searching glance at little Crow, with a good deal of severity in it, laid his business before Crow's mother.

"We all know, Mrs. Christopher," he said, "that you are having a rather hard time of it, paying for your pretty home here, and are going to have for the next few years. It's always a hard fight for a woman. You know that I have been patient, and shall be, about the payments not being kept up to specifications, as long as there is any reasonable prospect that they will

be met at all. But I want to assist you more than that; and so does Tom here, and Tom's mother. So we have been carrying out a plan by which Crow can help you right along, double what he has done, and with all his expenses paid and clothing found."

By this time Mrs. Christopher had fastened her eyes on her rich neighbor's face with the most intense wonderment. Crow's eyes, too, wore an intense expression, not of wonderment, but of fear, as he sat with both hands grasping the seat of his chair.

"My wife's brother, Tom's uncle," went on Mr. Glenn, "has a big clothing-store in Cleveland, and employs a good many boys of one age and another, and offers to give Crow a good place at four dollars a week, and take him into his family—as one of Tom's friends, you know. This will help you pay off interest and principal in a short time, you know; and it will start Crow into a good business—you will not need to feel anxious about him in any way. We are very glad we can do this for one of our neighbors, Mrs. Christopher."

Tom looked at Crow keenly, and at Crow's mother.

"But," went on Mr. Glenn, "Crow is wanted there on Wednesday morning. My brother wishes to see him before he leaves on a long business journey."


Mrs. Christopher gathered herself together. The possibilities of the position were wonderful,

situated as they were. She turned toward her boy.

“What do you say, Crow?”

The little fellow got up. He turned as he rose and bent upon Tom a look of the most dreadful suffering and reproach.

Tom lost his self-reliance for a second, and rose too — he stepped across and looked out at a carriage passing.

 “I’ll go, mother,” said the little fellow. “It’s a good chance for us.” And he had the self-control to stand up like a little man and say, “Thank you, Mr. Glenn!” He looked at Mr. Glenn with a pair of steady, searching blue eyes. Tom’s father almost quailed before them, for it did not seem possible that the manly child could have committed the deed which the boys had witnessed; and involuntarily he held out his hand to him, and Crow gave him his, with a sudden feeling that Tom’s father didn’t know what he was doing to him! It was a strange minute anyway for little Crow, for he felt bewildered by the form of good fortune which Tom’s seeming cruelty was taking.

Tom beckoned him out into the garden. “All right so far, Crow,” he said huskily. “It won’t be so bad! you’ll earn a heap of money, and if you keep mum we’ll look out good and strong for your mother — father and I. That’s so — we will!”

Tom appeared wretched. Crow saw it, and felt the touch of hope.

"Tom," the little fellow said eagerly, "I'll be mum anyway! Don't make me leave mother! I'll be mum always!"

"No, sir," said Tom, an ugly look in his eyes of something that would go to any length. "You look out! *I* love my father—if father should know, it would kill him. *You* love your mother—if she should believe what I and my father will tell her if you make us, it would kill her the same. You want to look out!"

So Tom's father knew, Tom's father believed he was a thief. They could make his mother believe it, they could make the town believe it.

Tom saw the wan whiteness rise on the child's face—the loving, manly, despairing face. For a moment it almost crushed Tom, but it did not make him relent.

"You go straight along and the secret's kept!" he said. "You go along the way I want you to, and I'll make father do you all the good I can think of! I'll make it up to you!"

There were tears of suffering in Tom's eyes. But—to "make up" to honorable little Crow the shame of being thought a thief by a good man like Mr. Glenn? Crow recoiled from great, blundering, wicked, unrelenting Tom, turned on his little heel, and went back into the house.

"I've told kind Mr. Glenn that I'll have you ready to-night for the ten-o'clock express," said Crow's mother. "He'll take you down and put you in the conductor's care."

“Mr. Glenn,” said Crow, speaking up in his piping young voice, “you’ll come so that mother can ride down too?”

Do you not understand? The little fellow felt that unless his mother were along, so that he could look at her to the last moment and remember what might befall her should he speak out, he might break down and declare the whole to Mr. Glenn! Just as the moon rose he was riding down with his mother to the station. He had not been over to bid Duke and Sammy farewell. He had not seen Mrs. Updyke. He had not seen Mrs. Black. The cave seemed a dream. Tom was in the carriage, as Crow knew he would be, keeping guard. His mother had said to him, “It is for the best, Crow. Oh, Crow, it would so have pleased your father to see you a business man out in the world!”

At the station, as they heard the distant whistle of the express, Tom took him aside. “Now you keep mum to every living human being!” he whispered, “and you are safe and I am safe. So long’s I feel safe your mother’s safe! But let one whisper, *one*, reach my father against me, and he’s sure to turn her out, and to send *you* where you will circulate no stories!”

And then the train was on them with its lightning and thunder, and Crow had broken away from Tom and stood with his arms around his mother like a protector; and Tom’s father,

drawn to him with a great respect as he met the manly look of the child, laid his hand on his shoulder and said to him, "You are going to be a successful man, my boy! and you and your mother'll be in a home of your own — be true, Crow, and I'll see that you are!"

"I *am* true! I *am* true! I *am* true, Mr. Glenn!" rang out little Crow's piping voice, and then he was away from his mother. Tom's father had taken him into the lighted coach and was gone. The train was gliding on, the conductor had come to him, and the last sight of home scenes was of Tom leaning in the dark against a freight car on the next track, his head turned away.

"Oh, yes," moaned little Crow in his heart, "it *would* be hard for Tom to have his father think him a thief — but I was never going to tell!"

XI.

LIFE IN THE CAVE.

To Duke and Sammy it was a great wonder that Crow had gone without saying good-by! To everybody it was a wonder, too, about Crow's desirable position — so much pay, and such "gentlemanly work," and "board" in the family of the head partner; though all agreed that Crow was a "little gentleman," if ever there was one; also that he would earn his pay if any boy of ten could. For several days after he had gone everybody was speaking of little Crow Christopher, of his energy and trustiness, his thoroughness and manliness — it seemed that there wasn't a man in town more respected than this little boy of ten.

Tom Glenn was everywhere about, anxious to hear all that was said, and appearing so pleased when Crow was praised — poor Tom who sinned with one hand and strove to make restitution with the other. Everybody knew that it was Mr. Glenn who had secured the place for little Crow, and that it was Mrs. Glenn's brother who was the head of the business; but nobody knew that half of Crow's pay was forthcoming from Mr. Glenn!

Letters came from Crow soon — one for his mother, a duty-letter for Mr. Glenn, and to Duke and Sammy there was a joint letter; but all were rather stiff, even the one to his mother. But the senior partner's quiet, quaint little message-boy wrote dozens of other letters — homesick, tear-stained, long ones; these he never mailed. His mother sent him a letter of pages and pages every few days, and these were the bread of life on which little Crow was kept alive. Duke and Sammy wrote two or three times during the summer; theirs were about the cave, and became much worn in a very short time, and looked as letters do that are carried in pockets. The boys wrote mostly about the cave, because the cave was the important thing that summer.

When Duke got home that night after the discovery, and had had his supper, and soaked his face and hands and wrists full of witch-hazel, and he and Rebecca had gone up stairs for the night, he went into Rebecca's room as he frequently did when he wanted to talk, because his was directly over his father's.

And there he told Rebecca all about the discovery. "We're going to have good times in that cave," he said; "we can do almost anything in such a place — but just what we'll do first I don't know."

"Well, *I* know," said Rebecca, "what I would advise you to do; you and Sammy want to tell your fathers and mothers about it.

We aren't going to have you off in a place we none of us know anything about, except that it's up somewhere on Middle Sable, and you start from a spring and almost at once are lost in a wilderness of maple saplings, and at some tree or other strike off to the right into another wilderness of hemlocks and holes, where you walk with a prodding-pole ; and somewhere or other there is a fine cave, and you are all right if you find it — but if you don't — why, you don't ! I judge it's ten to one if ever you set eyes on it again ! ”

This was the longest speech Duke ever had known Rebecca to make.

“ Oh ! of course we have a landmark,” he said. “ It was there all the time, only we had to discover the cave before we could see that it was a landmark. When we had done that — there was the landmark all right, fast enough ! I'll tell you where 'tis now, so you'll know, if ever we get lost, and you have to come for us. When you get to the tree, the one you get to from the spring — the cupboard-tree that I told you about — there's the landmark plain to be seen — a great, bristling, shaggy brown bunch of something that sticks up off to the right. When you get to it, it's a pile of dead hemlock-trees, tipped over by some tornado maybe, and you climb about among a lot of big rocks, till you go in behind the roots — and there's the cave ! ”

“ Well,” said Rebecca, “ if you want mother

and me willing to have you go up there and play you are dwelling in a cave, you and Sammy are going to take father and Mr. Updyke along the very next time you go, so that they can know all about it."

Duke and Sammy talked it over the next day — Crow was off on his weeding jobs. They agreed that Rebecca was right. So the first convenient day Mr. Black and Mr. Updyke put on their hats, shouldered their axes, and went up Middle Sable, blazing the saplings up along into the hemlocks, and then cut away and tossed aside the stuff, brown and green, dead and live alike, all the way to the cupboard-tree. Some of the shag the boys put back. Duke said it would be no fun at all to go up a broad open daylight path — what they wanted was a secret Indian trail.

Mr. Black and Mr. Updyke admitted they saw the landmark "all right" from the cupboard-tree.

"Well, then, isn't that enough?" asked Duke; "you can see by it where the cave is!"

No; the fathers said it wasn't enough. There must be a good walkable road to the cave.

Hemlock is ugly tree-stuff to deal with. The boys objected, besides, to any sort of cutting and clearing that would reveal "a road to some place" to a chance climber. The work really had to be done according to their directions. It was late in the afternoon, following

the prodding-poles, and avoiding a hole here and a rock there, before the fathers had the highway laid out.

They reached the cave just at sunset. "Too late to climb such ledges as these and go down in," Mr. Updyke said.

Sammy and Duke were bitterly disappointed. They wanted to show off the height and the width of it, the fireplace and the "sitting-stones."

"No, boys," said Mr. Updyke. "We know where to find you now, and that's what we came for." And back the fathers strode and stumbled down the hill.

Henceforth Crow's cave was a "habitation and a name" — a dwelling where fires were built and meals cooked, and where the two great Pigwacket chiefs, Paugus and Wahwa, planned many a scout, many a feast.

By degrees every trace of what Paugus called "pale-face civilization" disappeared from the life in the cave. True Indian habits and domestic implements appeared — so far as they could be studied and contrived from "library-books;" notably, clam-shells took the place of knives and spoons, and sharp spears of wood made forks unnecessary. A lamp, bent up into shape from a flat piece of tin, that would "hold" tallow and a rag-wick and hang on a nail thrust in a crevice of rock, was a proud triumph. Such inconveniences as smoke, half-burned meat torn into strips by force of fingers and the jack-knife,

and ashes on the roasted apples, were simply "wigwam-y."

A worn old buffalo robe was brought up and cut in pieces; the large section covered a huge bunk of hemlock needles and twigs, while smaller pieces were spread over the "sitting-stones." They were rather obliged to resort to the old robe for furs, as neither of the Pig-wackets had a taste for hunting, never had shot a squirrel in their lives, nor even longed to own a gun.

They made it a rule to throw down a good armful of broken hemlock branches at every visit, and as the fires burned very well the cave really had quite a comfortable Indian appearance. The lamp gave a fair light, and they often read aloud with genuine enjoyment the big buckskin-bound volume of "Hiawatha" which Mrs. Updyke had presented to Sammy on his birthday.

It was in reading Longfellow's great North American Indian story that the idea sprang up of making an Indian feast for the Pale Faces. They spoke of it as the "Feast of Mondamin."

"It will be about the same, I s'pose, as Harvest Feast at the Grange," said Sammy.

"Not much it won't!" said Duke.

XII.

PIGWACKET TALK.

WHILE the two Pigwackets were still known among the whites as Duke and Sammy, in their cave life they were strictly Paugus and Wahwa, the two chiefs in the fight at Lovewell's Pond.

This was not different from the manner of boys ever since the beginning of time, but they got as much fun out of the fiction as though they were the first to try it. Two other boys in another part of the town addressed each other as "Athos" and "D'Artagnan." Of this pair of immortals, Duke and Sammy were ignorant; but they would have felt that even to be two of Dumas' famous Musketeers were small glory when you could be instead two of the great old Indians of your own State!

The boys were at the cave twice or thrice a week during July and August. This seemed seldom; they would have gone oftener had Crow remained at home to carry out his engagements. In consequence of Crow's absence, all "going after the cows," a good deal of weeding, much "raking after," and many errands, fell to their lot. But in the evenings of even the busiest days they got together and searched

histories and magazines for chance allusions to the Pigwackets. Mrs. Updyke had taught them the enjoyment of collating facts and dates and localities.

One rainy day Sammy's mother got out a file of New Hampshire's historical magazine. She spent some time looking the numbers through before she turned them over to the boys.

"It seems there are monuments set up to your great Pigwacket man," she said.

But the boys found nothing at all of any monument to Paugus.

"Oh," said Mrs. Updyke, with a mischievous smile, "have you been looking for a monument in marble or bronze? Wouldn't it have been more suitable to name a lake or a mountain in his memory?"

This idea was fascinating. After a long hunt the boys found that one of the beautiful Winnepesaukee waters had been christened "Lake Paugus," not long before; and that one of the mountains of the Sandwich Range had been named "Mount Paugus." And both were in easy travel distance from Lovewell's Pond! And behold, to Duke's great satisfaction, Mount Paugus was what you might call a wild mountain, an Indian mountain, a wholly primitive and uncivilized mountain, inhabited by lynx and bear and whatever wild beast you chose to fancy most! Ah, that *was* a monument!

"What's the news from Paugus?" was generally Mrs. Updyke's greeting to Duke.

“Glorious news!” cried Duke one day. “The Intervales, up at Conway, where all the big people love to go in the summer, used to be called the Pigwacket Intervales. Mr. Belknap says so in his History. Oh, I tell you books are great things! How *could* folks ever have left off the Indian part! I’d so much rather go summering to the Pigwacket Intervales than to the Intervale, or Conway, or North Conway! When I get to be a great man, or a society man, or whatever sort of man it is that can give a name to a place, see if I don’t change it back!”

Sometimes Duke would come in with a greeting of the same kind: “Any news from the Pigwackets?”

Mrs. Updyke answered one day, “What would you say, Duke, to hear that the Pigwackets helped us white folks to discover Mount Washington?”

“How? How did you find it out?”

Mrs. Updyke laughed. “Oh, in a library book!” She took out a book from the stand-drawer. It was Drake’s “Making of New England.”

“A white man,” said Mrs. Updyke, “a Mr. Darby Field, came up to the Pigwacket country to visit the crystal mountain with the wonderful carbuncle on its crown, which shone and glittered at midnight. He staid among the Pigwacket Indians—they lived only twelve miles away—and learned all he could about

the mountain. He found they believed it, in its snowy splendor, to be the abode of the gods, and regarded it with the greatest awe. They liked to talk about the mountain, but they would only go part way up — their reverence was too great! It was the Pigwackets' great mountain long before it was ours, Duke. This was in sixteen hundred thirty-two, and I can promise that you will find many allusions to this visit of Darby Field, in your reading."

"Wasn't it beautiful?" Duke breathed out. "When *I* go, it will be to visit the religious mountain of my Pigwackets, not the fashionable mountain of the white folks!"

"It truly was the Indians' 'religious mountain,'" said Mr. Updyke. "They believed that old Passaconaway, as you call him, was once carried up from its summit in a chariot of fire to attend an Indian Council in heaven."

"Oh, where did you read that?" cried Duke.

"In a library-book," said Mrs. Updyke, with a smile. "In Starr King's 'White Hills' — you boys better read that book!"

XIII.

MYSTERIES.

As soon as the two Pigwackets had determined to have the "Feast of Mondamin," they set to work. Sometimes they went up Middle Sable two or three days in succession.

Rebecca had a little box of shells, tiny sea shells. Some of them she had picked up herself on a visit to Nantasket beach, but most of them had been sent to her from the island of Nantucket. Duke coaxed her to sell him these, and also prevailed on his father, who was going down to Boston, to bring him a few clam-shells.

"Clam-shells! What do you want of clam-shells?" demanded his father.

"Well, you know, father, that I can't do any mischief with clam-shells," said poor Duke.

"But what *do* you want of them?" persisted Mr. Black.

"Father, did you want to tell everything you planned to do, when you were a boy?" asked Duke.

Mrs. Black laid her hand on her husband's arm as she passed. Nothing more was said about the clam-shells; but Mr. Black brought

some, and Marmaduke went off with them to get Sammy. For several days after, strange sounds of chipping and pounding could have been heard issuing from the bowels of the earth, had any one been passing a certain point on Middle Sable. The same person strolling along the base of the hill might have noticed that large sections of bark had been cut from two or three of the big birch-trees. These pieces of bark, too, had been taken up to the cave, together with some black paint and a couple of Rebecca's brushes.

And shortly after, Duke and Sammy began to gather up old leather; and one morning they begged for some needles and stout black thread, and also borrowed the "old shears."

In fact, so many mysterious articles were called for that Rebecca went into his room one night, and asked Marmaduke what they were wanted for.

"See here," said Duke, "I don't ask what *you* want things for!"

He wouldn't tell her; and Rebecca said that if it was for something all right he *would* tell.

"S'pose I should ask Christmas-time what you were going to give me for a Christmas-present, would you tell? And if you didn't, would I say if you were all right you *would* tell?"

Rebecca laughed. "Well, I'll put it in another way. Is it something that wouldn't make mother feel bad?"

Marmaduke always flashed if there was an insinuation that he wasn't treating his mother well. "I guess 'twouldn't make her feel bad when I'm doing it on purpose for her—and you, too, and Mrs. Updyke and father and Sammy's father! There! You make me tell any more, and I'll give the whole thing up! It's mean to badger a fellow so, as if he'd do some horrid thing or other if he got a chance!"

"Marmaduke," said Rebecca humbly, after a moment, "I never knew you to do a mean thing in your life—you, nor Sammy either," and then she went out.

Duke and Sammy were doing nothing wrong, and went on adding to their mysteries. They tugged an iron kettle up Middle Sable, and an old iron dripping-pan, and some other iron things, among them a mortar and pestle.

"These are things we can't make," said Wahwa. "We couldn't in ten years."

"You bet," said Paugus, "when I go up to the old Pigwacket plains on the Saco, I'll dig up some things that are really Indian!"

The two Pigwackets laid in a supply of wood, and they experimented a good deal over the coals and in the ashes, and thought the results pretty fair. They often chopped among the saplings an hour at a time, and filled in bad holes on the hemlock highway, and cleared away some of the rubbish about the cave.

At last the time came when they must take their fathers into the secret. They concluded

Sammy better tell his first. "Father is so quick and up and down," said Duke; "and he doesn't like to say yes if he's ever said no. Yours is slow, and waits to think, and leaves a chance to say yes if he should want to."

Mr. Updyke said neither yes nor no, but didn't object to Mr. Black's being asked over. Mr. Black seemed to think it very odd that Marmaduke should want him to go over to see Mr. Updyke, and gave him a searching look — "as if," felt Duke, "I had got into some trouble! I wonder why my folks always seem to expect that I've got into trouble?"

"Now, father, don't speak till I get through," said Marmaduke, when Mr. Black had got comfortably seated on the chopping-block in the wood-yard; and then he laid open the scheme, during which the two fathers seemed to find several occasions to exchange smiles.

After he got through, Duke said no more, not a word. Sammy said nothing.

"Well, boys," said Mr. Black, "we'll help you through. Mind though, you make it a feast worth while! What'll their mothers say," he added, as the boys galloped off like a pair of colts. Then both men threw back their heads and laughed.

"Picture 'em going in!" said Sammy's father.

XIV.

THE FEAST OF MONDAMIN.

ONE evening Mrs. Updyke, Mrs. Black, Rebecca and Mrs. Christopher were notified that there was to be a neighborhood picnic the next day. None of them learned where it was to be held. "It's a new kind," Mr. Black said; "a 'Follow-my-leader' picnic, if you want a name. And for once in your lives you haven't to bake and pack and lug along your refreshments. You simply want to be ready at ten o'clock in calico gowns and easy old shoes, and tie on a snug hat, and put a fan in your pocket, and a handkerchief or two. That's all. You needn't ask questions, for that's *all!*"

"Do the boys know? Aren't the boys going?" Mrs. Updyke asked.

"They'll be somewhere around," said Mr. Black.

The boys were found to know all about it, and to have suggested that Crow's mother be asked.

But they were not "around" when the company set out, with Mr. Black as the leader. Everybody seemed to go along naturally to

the corner and turn in by the spring in the moss; and they had even entered upon the trail in the saplings before they mistrusted whither they were bound; but at that point they guessed it.

"Why," said Mrs. Updyke, stopping to laugh, "we are going up to the boys' cave!"

"Of course," laughed Rebecca; "and it's the boys that are giving us the picnic!"

And then Mrs. Christopher looked sorrowful; for if Crow had been home he would have been there with Sammy and Marmaduke.

They went single-file, with some difficulty to be sure, but also with a good deal of laughter.

When some distance up, they were stopped. At one side of the trail, among the saplings, stood a row of the funniest, prettiest green booths imaginable, six of them. Each was formed of two saplings, with branches and leaves, bent over and lapped, then bound together with rope. In each stood a stout rustic camp-stool, made of limbs crossed and tied fast, the seat of rope.

At either end of this sylvan arcade stood a slender figure — two young Indian boys. They were of a beautiful copper color. They wore little helmet-like caps of red squirrel fur, and at the peak, from which rose a crow-quill, was an ornament of shell-work; below the cap, in one case, streamed coal-black locks, but the other young brave plainly had red hair, as two or three wisps of it were to be seen. This one

had big, fiery blue orbs, but the one with black hair had black eyes.

The red flannel shirts of the Indians had a very familiar look; but the short trousers were trimmed at the side with a fringe of corn-husk, and worn with broad war-belts of ancient leather wrought thick with wampum — rough shell-work in which were set finer patterns of small ocean shells; they were also trimmed at the bottom, with fringe made of shells and strips of soft leather. Each wore in his wampum belt a knife resembling a jack-knife, and on his shoulder carried a tomahawk much like a wood-hatchet.

The two gorgeous young braves came forward. "Will the Pale Faces taste the hospitality of Paugus and Wahwa, the Pigwackets?" inquired he of the red locks and fiery eyes, pointing to the booths. "Enter, and rest and eat!"

Seated in the shady green arches, each Pale Face received a birch-bark basket of popped corn, and little square trays of bark were distributed holding shelled meats of butternut, walnut, hazelnut and beechnut. Stone bottles of spring water were passed. No better life-sustaining road-lunch could have been served. It was eaten in silence, as the Pale Faces were unused to conversation with the Red Men of the Forest. To be sure, one of the braves, he of the fiery eyes, gave Mrs. Black's hand a silent squeeze once as he passed her, and Mrs. Black courteously squeezed back.

The young Indians soon led the way on to reach a distant lodge of the Pigwackets. About noon they came to a wide-spreading tree, where they halted. From a cupboard in the interior of the trunk, refreshments were taken, though it appeared from some words exchanged between the braves that two packages containing crackers and chipped beef had been mysteriously removed. However, the Pale Faces were plentifully served with prunes and raisins, supposed to be the dried fruit of native plum-trees and grape-vines. Stone bottles of cold acid water, taken from a small cellar in the ground, were passed.

The march was again resumed. The trail led now among scraggy hemlock and low rocks. It wound on a long distance, and ended in the midst of a disorderly pile of very large rocks, but among which with ease tripped the light feet of the Indians, assisting the guests. Behind some huge, dead, upturned hemlocks, upon an oblong ledge sufficiently large to give standing-room for all, there was a halt—and the black-haired Indian whirled about and proceeded to slip down a chasm between the ledge and another rock vast and overhanging.

As if according to instructions, or a signal, Mr. Black turned about also, got down on his hands and knees, and followed.

“All safe for the Woman Pale Face,” said the red-locked brave at Mrs. Black’s side.

The Woman Pale Face shrank back.

"Oh, come along," cried up Mr. Black, down below. "I'm planted here on a first-rate stone, and I'll keep hold of you and guide you."

But the Woman Pale Face shook her head. "I can't," she said.

"Come on, Mrs. Updyke! you aren't afraid!" called Mr. Black.

"Of course she isn't!" said Mr. Updyke. "Go right down, Helen."

With a laugh, gathering her skirts close about her, Mrs. Updyke knelt down, and Mr. Updyke steadied her, and she disappeared; and then she seemed to be swung off somewhere farther down, and a gruff Indian voice inquired "All right, mother?"

Little Mrs. Christopher followed, without a word, and then Rebecca. Mrs. Black, standing outside, could hear them both, somewhere, laughing. Then the blue-eyed Indian by her side, talking in a voice as guttural as possible, put his arm around her and led her along. The sounds of merry laughter below helped assure her; and with Mr. Updyke and the young brave above to assist her, and Mr. Black below, she yielded, and was let down the dim descent. Half stooping she was hurried along, and soon came out with the others, into an open place — such a weird, enchanting place!

"Welcome, Pale Faces! welcome! welcome! welcome to the lodge of Wahwa and Paugus!" exclaimed the Indians in perfect concert.

They pointed the Pale Face women to the

seat of honor, the couch of fur. The men stood gazing about in astonishment at the Indian character of the cave. The Pigwacket chiefs remained silent, as if to observe the impression made by their lodge.

The fire was the great feature, the domestic feature, the home feature, the feast feature, the feature of hospitality. It burned on a broad hearth of rock, and filled the lodge with savory odors of roasting corn and potatoes. On its coals stood an iron kettle, in which corn and beans were bubbling into a delicious Indian succotash.

Near-by, on a stone laid with green leaves, rose a golden pyramid of harvest apples, surrounded by bark baskets of shining blackberries. A row of brown bowls was ranged near, between piles of birch-bark trays, with wooden spoons and forks, plainly the products of jack-knives.

Above hung the tin lamp, its rag-wicks blazing. "Taken from some settler's cabin without doubt! Ugh!" whispered Mrs. Updyke to Mrs. Black.

On the walls, hanging by rough twigs stuck in cracks of the rocks, were several sheets of birch-bark on which were rudely pictured forth Indian battles, feasts, and hunts, journeys, and horrible dances. Fishing-spears hewed from wood, and branches of acorns and cones, hung among the pictures, with bunches of wild quills of all kinds.

Mrs. Updyke could wait no longer. "Boys!" she called. "Paugus Duke and Sammy Wahwa! We are proud of you! Come now and let's enjoy it!" She had already whispered to Mrs. Black several times that she was proud of the boys.

The two young Pigwackets still stood stately. "When the Pale Faces have feasted then will the tongues of the Red Men of the Woods be unloosed," said the blue-eyed brave.

Then, with wooden paddles and spears and their belt-knives, a pile of new corn in the husk and new potatoes in the skin was lifted from the roasting ashes, and served to the guests on bark trays. Dried salmon and halibut were passed. Then came little brown bowls of succotash, with good silver spoons, though the chieftains themselves ate from clam-shells! Immense basswood leaves served as napkins. Next were brought tiny birch boxes containing pounded parched corn mixed with finely scraped maple sugar, and these were followed by blackberries and apples. Last were passed stone bottles of spring-water, chilled in the heart of the earth.

Such was the feast of the copper-colored cave-dwellers to the Pale Faces.

In great gravity followed the smoking of the peace-pipe. This was a large clay pipe, clean and new, filled with sweet-fern, and lighted at a live coal from the hearth. It was passed from hand to hand, and each solemnly drew a

whiff, though Mrs. Updyke had trouble in restraining the scream of mirth that rose to her lips; and scream at last she did, half strangled with fun and a swallow of smoke. The others joined in, and the two Indians broke into a scalp-dance, when suddenly there came into the fun a keen cry — a cry that seemed a succession of sobs.

All rose in haste, listening. It seemed to come from somewhere in the entrance passage.

“Is it a panther — is a wild animal in the cave?” asked Mrs. Black, trembling.

Mrs. Christopher had rushed past her. She knew that cry! From the passage a small figure came suddenly into sight — a little lad, wild-eyed, hatless, his coat torn — a poor little image of Crow Christopher.

It *was* Crow Christopher; and as if he could not stay among them a moment without confessing, from his mother’s arms he turned to face them — and, oh, how thrilling the high, piping voice was, moaning out to his old friends!

“I *couldn’t* stay! I have run away! I couldn’t stay, mother! I have run away! I came off the train at Dixville, and came across. I couldn’t go to our house, mother. I came to the cave, and took things to eat from the boys’ cupboard-tree, and I came in and staid all night, after the boys had gone home. And I saw you all come to-day. And I saw you, mother, and I could not stand it. I saw you all, and I knew that you wouldn’t believe it!”

And then little trembling Crow leaned back against his mother.

"Believe what, Crow?" asked Mrs. Christopher, trembling like her boy.

"Crow, believe what?" asked Mr. Black.

"We don't believe anything, Crow!" shouted Duke; "what is it?"

"Yes, Crow, what is it?" said Mrs. Updyke. "Good heavens, what is it, I'd like to know!" she said to Mrs. Black, who was down on her knees holding the scratched, shaking hands.

"He is out of his head. He must be got home," said Mrs. Christopher.

Crow tried to stand up. "Let's go," he chattered, shaking as if with cold. "Mother, we can go somewhere and work, and be together. I don't believe Mr. Glenn would shut me up so we'd be away from each other forever!"

The guests of the Pigwackets looked at one another, bewildered. Mr. Black passed his hand across his eyes, frowning. "See here!" said he, "let's get the child out of this! Then Updyke and I will look into it. Crow?"

But Crow, leaning against his mother, was asleep!

Mr. Black took him gently up in his arms, and the feast was at an end, the guests making their way forth, scrambling, and lifted and helped one by another, and going down Middle Sable, wondering about poor little Crow, and not knowing how to comfort Mrs. Christopher.

XV.

TOM AND GRAN'DAD.

THE next morning early, Mr. Black and Mr. Updyke were at Mrs. Christopher's. Little Crow was asleep, and they didn't see him. But he had told his mother something more of his trouble, and this little she told her neighbors.

"He thinks," she said, "that Mr. Glenn thinks he's a bad boy, and sent him away lest he should rob farmhouses where he worked. He says Mr. Glenn thinks he got into old Mr. Glenn's room and tried to rob him — oh, I don't understand it! It seems such an unreasonable thing — that our home would be taken from us if my poor little boy didn't leave town! Mr. Glenn has been very good to us always. I fear Crow has gone out of his poor little head!"

Mrs. Christopher was breaking down.

"Come, Updyke," said Mr. Black, "we'll go up to Glenn's and get to the bottom of this thing. Don't you worry, Mrs. Christopher; we know that little Crow has done nothing wrong. We'll have it all cleared up before night!"

Mr. Black and Mr. Updyke went up to the Glenn farm. Mr. Glenn was at home, in the house, in the sitting-room. His father sat there too, with his paper. Tom was lying on the lounge, reading.

Mr. Black spoke out, with no delay. "Glenn, little Crow Christopher came home last night. He ran away, to get home to his mother. He's very ill — I don't know but he has brain-fever."

Tom had got to his feet. "Probably he has, if he's run away from my uncle!" he said. Then he seemed to change his mind, and sat down.

Mr. Glenn looked at Mr. Black in astonishment. "Crow has come home! Has run away!"

"Yes," said Mr. Black; "and he seems to be in trouble about you, Glenn. We all know you've been very kind to him, and got him his place. But poor little Crow says you think he's a bad boy, and that you sent him out of town because you believed he got into your father's room and tried to steal" —

Tom, Mr. Glenn, old Mr. Glenn, rose from their seats at the same moment.

"Well," Mr. Glenn said, "I'm sorry to say" —

"It's all true, Mr. Black," Tom began.

"Richard" — then Tom's grandfather paused, and seemed to paralyze him with a glance from under his shaggy eyebrows. Tom sat down once more. "Richard," said old Mr. Glenn to his son, "is this true? Did you send little

Crow Christopher off to Daniel because you believed he tried to enter my room and rob me? How did you get your information?"

"Why, Tom told me, father. We didn't mean you ever to know. Tom and Bert Jones caught him with your bill-book in his hand, and noiselessly got him out, and put him on his good behavior until they could talk with me. They were sorry for him, and begged for him, and planned his going to Cleveland, lest he attempt to rob you again, and frighten you out of the peace of your home."

Gran'dad had grown ghastly white, but he kept on his feet. He turned on his grandson with a look still more terrible to bear, for in it was the reproach of a loving heart. Tom could not bear it. He got up on his feet once more.

"Gran'dad," he said, "Gran'dad, Gran'dad—"

"Sit down, Tom," said his grandfather. "I will confess it for you; for I was not asleep. I saw you. It just broke my heart! and I could not expose you. I could understand a sudden temptation; and when I found the bills back in place the next day, I felt sure you had repented. But little Crow Christopher! It would seem the little fellow saw you by some chance, and lest he speak of it—oh, Tom, my boy, that you should be, after all, so hardened a young fellow! To wrong poor little Crow Christopher!" The scanty tears of old age stood in Gran'dad's eyes. He eased himself down into his chair slowly.

Mr. Glenn's neighbors felt sympathy for him, and turned away in silence. Mr. Glenn, however, followed them to the door.

"This shall be set right," he said.

"We know that, Glenn," said Mr. Updyke.

Mr. Glenn took his hat and turned to his son.

"Come, Tom!"

"Yes, father," said Tom.

"You may send me up Squire Halliday, Richard," said Gran'dad.

"Yes, father."

Mr. Glenn and Tom said not a word to each other on the way down to the little Christopher house. Both felt sure Tom had lost the big Glenn property.

"It serves me right," said Tom to himself.

"It serves us right," said the father in his wretched heart.

What was said in the Christopher sitting-room never became fully known to either the Blacks or the Updykes. Neither Tom nor his father saw Crow — little Crow was too ill.

His mother went in, and told him that Mr. Glenn knew now, and Gran'dad, and Mr. Updyke, and Mr. Black, that he had not been in Gran'dad's room, and that Gran'dad had seen Tom and Bert at the desk.

"What shall I tell Mr. Glenn and Tom for you, my child?"

"Oh," said poor little Crow, "tell Tom I'll never tell! And now Tom'll be good again. I used to love Tom — tell him I did, mother."

Poor little Crow! he was too tired and ill to think much about anything. He forgot all about Tom in a few minutes. He was ill for a long time, nearly all summer.

When Tom and his father went out to go home, Tom spoke. "Father, I would like to go away. I would like to go away and take some place to learn to do business, or else learn a trade. I can't stay here. I don't want to mix with a lot of young fellows at school either. I want to be alone!"

"Tom," said his father, "stay right here at home. When it is time to go to school, go to school. Let Mr. Black and Mr. Updyke see you live down all the bad, all the evil, that was in you!"

So said Gran'dad Glenn; so said the best impulse in Tom's own heart.

By and by, many things had happened. Little Crow had got well. Mrs. Christopher had a clear deed of her home with no mortgage attached; and later Crow was away at school. But not until after he had become happy and familiar with all his old friends once more, and had spent many merry hours in the cave with Marmaduke and Sammy; not until after he had lived down every pitiful memory. And then, after other years still had gone by, half of old Gran'dad Glenn's wealth was his. Tom was the one to take him to the house to hear the will read. Tom was just home from college when Gran'dad died. He was a big, grave sort of

fellow, with purposes to carry out; but the great feeling in all his after-life was his friendship for little Crow. And after more years had gone, Crow was just entering college with Marmaduke and Sammy. He had caught up with the boys, and was entering the same year.

When they are in Duke's room and making plans, one is to spend a vacation among the ancient seats of the Pigwackets and the old haunts of Paugus, by the Saco, in the great Coos country. "And perhaps," says Duke, "I'll take it in hand, while I'm about such things, to learn whether I really am a relative of the Chamberlain who fought the old chief!"

They make the fine plans that generous young fellows love to make; such as that of devoting years of their lives to travel and work in their native land to restore to the rivers and lakes and mountains and localities the Indian names they anciently bore. And another is the founding for their college of a professorship for the study of Early Indian North America — "the Mrs. Updyke Professorship," says Duke, and Sammy smiles the smile of the cave days.

"I'll pay the salaries, I'll endow it!" cries little Crow; and little Crow has wealth sufficient.

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